

VZCZCXRO3302  
OO RUEHCN RUEHGH  
DE RUEHIN #1515/01 2981134  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 241134Z OCT 08  
FM AIT TAIPEI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0186  
INFO RUEHB/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 8666  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 9835  
RUEHK/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0290  
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 2863  
RUEHGZ/AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU 1455  
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 0114  
RUEHGH/AMCONSUL SHANGHAI 2275  
RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG 6821  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHHJJAA/JICPAC HONOLULU HI  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RHHMUNA/USPACOM HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TAIPEI 001515

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/24/2018

TAGS: PGOV PREL CH TW

SUBJECT: OPPOSITION DPP TO DEMONSTRATE SATURDAY IN THE  
RUN-UP TO VISIT BY SENIOR PRC OFFICIAL

REF: A. TAIPEI 1496  
1B. TAIPEI 1306

Classified By: AIT Director Stephen M. Young,  
Reasons: 1.4 (b/d)

11. (C) Summary. The DPP and likeminded organizations will hold a large march and rally this Saturday (Oct.25) to demonstrate their supporters' discontent with President Ma's performance, his policies toward China, and PRC actions. This demonstration will set the stage for further protests when PRC Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS) Chairman Chen Yunlin visits Taiwan the week of November 3-8. The crowd on Saturday is expected to be larger than the estimated 60-80,000 that participated in a similar march and rally on August 30 (reftel), though predicted rain might dampen the proceedings somewhat. Recent developments, including controversial comments by Ma on Taiwan's status, an insensitive statement by ARATS Vice Chairman Zhang Mingqing while visiting Taiwan ("no independence, no war"), and perceived kowtowing to China by the government in dealing with a scuffle between protesters and Zhang in Tainan (ref A), are energizing the Green base and will boost participation on Saturday. The controversial former President Chen Shui-bian, mired in corruption investigations, will participate on Saturday and is mobilizing his supporters to join the march. End Summary.

Five March Routes Converge on Single Rally Point

-----

12. (SBU) The DPP and likeminded pro-independence organizations, including the Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) and the Taiwan Society, are sponsoring marches and a rally in Taipei this Saturday to register their discontent with the Ma administration and the PRC. The activities on Saturday will begin in the afternoon with marches that will commence from five separate locations throughout Taipei and all end at the rally point in the boulevard leading to the Presidential Office. The five groups of marchers will each be led by a political heavyweight: DPP Chairperson Tsai Ing-wen, former Premier Su Tseng-chang, former DPP Chairman Yu Shyi-kun, TSU Chairman Huang Kun-hui, and former Examination Yuan President Yao Chia-wen (a last minute change since earlier former President Chen Shui-bian was said to have this honor). The most controversial march participant will be Chen. Prior to the march, the party's youth department is organizing a group of 300 students to spend the night at the former Chiang

Kai-shek Memorial, which is close to the Presidential Office.

¶13. (C) The overall theme for the march is "Oppose tainted products (from China), Protect Taiwan." The five groups of marchers also have separate themes: protesting tainted products imported from China (referring especially to the use of melamine in "poisoned milk powder"), opposing the proposal to form a "one China common market," protesting the incompetent government of President Ma, opposing the "hollowing out" of Taiwan's sovereignty, and opposing "one China education." (Note: This last theme refers to concerns that acceptance of PRC students and recognition of PRC degrees could take jobs away from Taiwan students.) DPP International Affairs Director Lin Chen-wei expressed concern to AIT that the large number of themes could cause some confusion. Marchers will converge in front of the Presidential Office and participate in a rally that will include speeches and entertainment and is scheduled to end at 10:00 p.m. unusually late for such an event.

¶14. (C) Organizers expect Saturday's turnout to exceed the turnout on August 30, when an estimated 60,000 - 80,000 participated in a similar protest activity. Lin Chen-wei noted that the DPP is sponsoring this event, whereas it just "actively supported" the August 30 rally. This time, the DPP has levied quotas on its elected officials, and it will bus in supporters from areas outside Taipei. The party is also expecting a large voluntary turnout from the greater Taipei area. Lin predicted the turnout would be about 1.5 times larger than on August 30 (ref B). Forecasted rain could

TAIPEI 00001515 002 OF 002

affect the turnout.

¶15. (C) Several contacts have told AIT that some recent comments by Ma Ying-jeou and the controversial visit of ARATS Vice Chairman Zhang Mingqing have stirred up the DPP base and will boost turnout and enthusiasm at the rally on Saturday. Ma has recently made a series of statements that DPP supporters view as compromising Taiwan's sovereignty, for example, his description of Taiwan as a region. Lin surmised that these and other comments by Ma were made to lay the groundwork for improved cross-Strait relations, but cautioned that "people are uneasy and getting worked up." Zhang Mingqing's "no independence, no war" statement during his visit to Taiwan, a subsequent scuffle with DPP members and supporters, and the KMT government's handling of the issue, which was perceived as coddling China, have further stirred up the Green base. The "no independence, no war" comment came after President Ma had said in a speech this Tuesday that there would be no war with China over the next four years. Zhang's remarks seemed to suggest to some skeptics an implicit coordination between Ma and Beijing. In the view of DPP supporters, the Ma administration seems more solicitous of China than of their concerns.

Former President Chen as Lightning Rod

-----

¶16. (C) Former President Chen's participation will heighten security concerns for Saturday's rally, although as former president he will have a security detail. President Chen has attracted very vocal opposition because of corruption scandals involving his wife and other family members, and protesters against him could appear on the march route. The DPP revealed on October 23 the receipt of a letter containing a bullet and warning Chen not to participate on Saturday. Scuffles also could erupt between his supporters and naysayers. Although Chen has promised to take a low profile on Saturday, and the DPP has ordered no actions either in support or opposition to Chen, his participation is sure to attract the media and public attention that energize him.

Warm-up for Protests to Come

-----

¶7. (C) This rally will serve as a warm-up for protests against Chen Yunlin, who will be in Taipei on November 3. DPP's Lin said the party will display "Taiwan's hospitality" and give Chen Yunlin a "warm welcome" with a series of protests. The DPP may have some problems in this effort, however, as the KMT has already reserved the area in front of the Presidential Office and an area close to where Chen will be staying for the entire period of the ARATS chairman's visit. Another concern was highlighted by former Premier Su Tseng-chang in an October 24 meeting with the Director. Su worried out loud that the DPP might--possibly with some KMT provocation--be drawn into violent protests that would damage the party's effort to recover from this past winter's electoral disasters.

SYOUNG